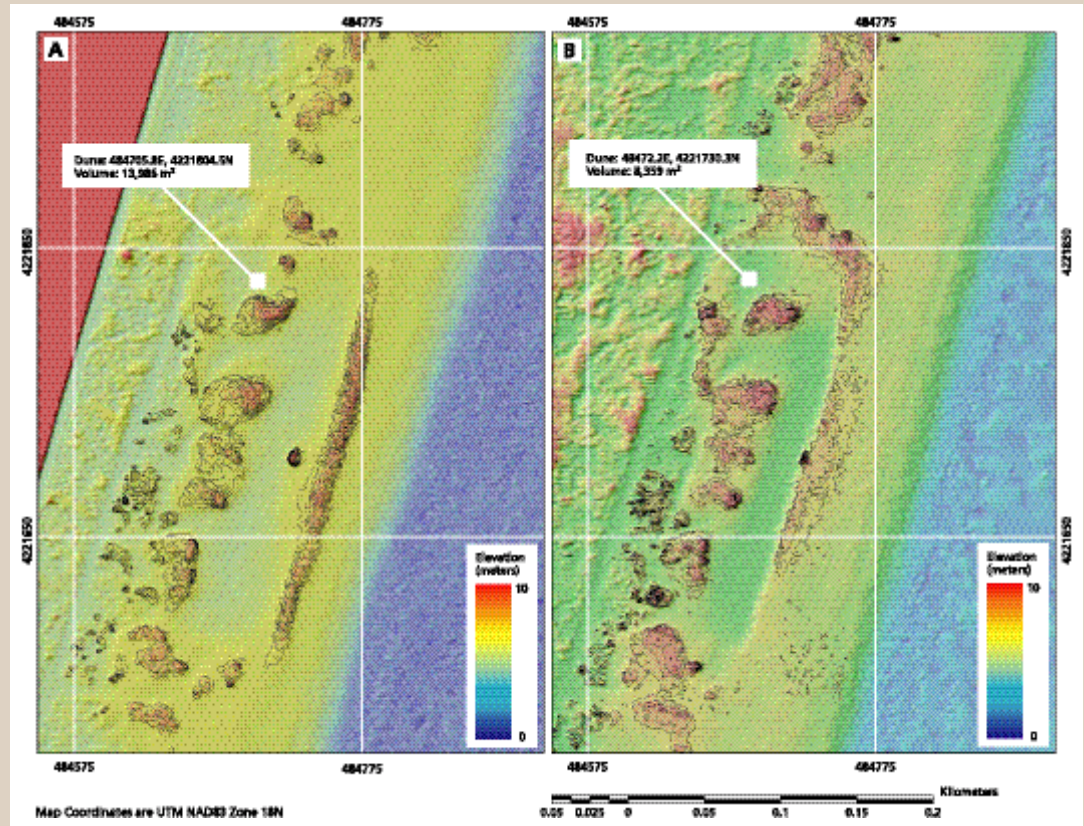


*"Flooding ... parks with commissioned rangers will not do the job. In the long run, we will win by showing that we have learned how these ecosystems function."*

Boyd Evison, Memo to NPS Director, 1989

## Building on the Challenge

A barrier island dune at Assateague Island National Seashore has moved southwest and decreased in volume, as revealed in this pair of maps developed from lidar elevation data collected on 3 April 1998 (left) and 5 September 2001 (right). The Northeast Coastal and Barrier Network is collaborating with several science partners to develop a protocol for monitoring shoreline change at many of the network parks that combines lidar and conventional mapping techniques.



*In 2002 the National Park Service continued to build the capacity for effective management of the irreplaceable landscapes and living things in national parks through the Natural Resource Challenge. Now in its fourth year, the Challenge is a multiyear effort to improve resource preservation throughout the National Park System by developing a better understanding of park natural resources and implementing fundamental and innovative resource management programs. With the President's FY 2003 budget, Congress will have made available \$675 million, or two-thirds, of the \$100 million in additional annual funding needed to realize the goals established under the Natural Resource Challenge. Articles in this chapter and throughout this report examine the progress under the Challenge in 2002. In particular, inventory and monitoring networks continued their evolution, with five new networks being established in 52 parks to track key physical and biological resources. The information developed will be used to assess resource condition, a critical need in the parks. Seventeen of 32 planned networks will be operational with FY 2003 funding; the other 15 networks are identified as needs in the remaining portion of the Challenge. Altogether, the articles demonstrate the tremendous contribution of the Natural Resource Challenge to National Park Service successes in 2002.*